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July 9, 2008

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"Museums like Donaldsonville's River Road African American Museum play an important role in preserving our heritage and educating future generations," said Rep. Melancon. "The Conservation Assessment Program has proven successful in helping small museums keep our country's history alive, and I thank Heritage Preservation for lending their resources and expertise to support one of our south Louisiana museums."

Past CAP participants have gone on to be successful in applying to competitive grant programs, raising private funds for their collections, and dramatically improving the professional standards at their museums.

The Conservation Assessment Program is designed to help small to mid-sized museums of all types obtain a general assessment of the condition of the museum's collections, environment, and historic buildings. Following an on-site assessment by a conservation professional, the museum receives a written report recommending priorities to improve collections care. This report assists museums in educating staff and board members, creating long-range and emergency plans, and raising funds to improve the care of their collections.

CAP provides much needed assistance to the approximately 12,000 small museums and historical societies that care for 198 million artifacts of our nation's historic, artistic, and scientific heritage. The importance of preservation programs such as CAP is underscored by the results of a 2005 study on the condition of U.S. collections that found that 75% of small museums and historical societies need a condition assessment of their collections.

Since CAP was begun in 1990, over 2,500 museums have benefited from participating in the program, which provides a critical first step in improving the care of their collections.

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